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RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANJUL 000386

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/17/2016
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [MCA](#) [GA](#)
SUBJECT: THE GAMBIA: SUSPENSION OF MCA ELIGIBILITY

Classified By: AMBASSADOR JOSEPH STAFFORD, REASON 1.4 (B AND D)

11. (C) SUMMARY. Ambassador met with Foreign Minister Bajo to convey MCC CEO Danilovich's June 16 letter to President Jammeh advising of the suspension of The Gambia's MCA eligibility. Ambassador reviewed with Bajo the reasons for the suspension and also provided copy of the MCC's June 16 press release. A subdued Bajo said the GOTG wanted to stay in close touch with us about the reinstatement process. Embassy will continue to stress to the GOTG the imperative of action to reverse the negative trends in performance on MCA selection criteria. END SUMMARY.

12. (SBU) Ambassador met June 17 with Foreign Minister Lamin Kaba Bajo to deliver Millenium Challenge Corporation CEO Danilovich's June 16 letter to President Jammeh (who was not immediately available for meeting) advising of the MCC Board of Directors' decision to suspend The Gambia's eligibility for Millenium Challenge Account (MCA) assistance.

13. (SBU) Ambassador provided Bajo a copy of the letter and reviewed it with him, stressing that the MCC's decision was based on clear evidence of deteriorating performance by the GOTG on the MCA selection criteria. Ambassador reviewed these criteria with Bajo, urged prompt, concrete steps by the GOTG to reverse the slippage in performance, and emphasized the Embassy's readiness to respond to any questions of the Gambians on this score. Ambassador noted that the GOTG could apply for reinstatement of MCA eligibility after a six-month period, but reiterated that, for any chance of reinstatement, it was incumbent on the GOTG to show substantial improvement in performance in the areas of slippage.

14. (C) In response, a subdued Bajo said he would ensure that Jammeh saw the letter promptly, but otherwise had little to say. Beyond expressing regret at the MCC's decision, he confined himself to stating that the GOTG wanted to stay in close touch with the Embassy about pursuing reinstatement. Ambassador urged that the GOTG also contact the non-USG institutions supplying data for the indicators used by the MCC in the selection process.

15. (SBU) Ambassador provided Bajo a copy of the MCC's June 16 press release announcing the decision to suspend. Bajo reviewed the press release, but made no comment.

16. (C) COMMENT: The GOTG is currently focussed on preparations for hosting the African Union Summit and related meetings June 25-July 2, and hence their reaction to the suspension may well remain muted until after the event. In any case, the Embassy intends to maintain an active dialog with the GOTG on the MCA program, stressing the imperative of action to reverse the negative trends in performance on MCA selection criteria if there is to be any possibility of eventual reinstatement. END COMMENT.
STAFFORD